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Andreas H. Jucker, Klaus P. Schneider and Wolfram Bublitz (Eds.): Methods in Pragmatics

De Gruyter Mouton, Berlin, 2018, 674 pp.

Methods in Pragmatics is volume 10 of the 13-volume, 9000-page series *Handbooks in Pragmatics*, a series which (as the casual observer might guess) adopts an avowedly broad and inclusive construal of pragmatics as an academic discipline, and explores it in considerable detail. This volume reflects that breadth: across 18 contributed chapters, accompanied by six substantial introductory and linking chapters written by the editors, it introduces and discusses the introspective, experimental, observational and corpus methods that underpin pragmatic research, from the armchair methods of pragmatic theorists through the lab-based paradigms beloved of psycholinguistic research to the principles of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis. A weighty section on corpus pragmatics treats the construction and annotation of corpora for pragmatic research, and the historical, functional and metapragmatic issues that these can illuminate.

Specifically, part 1 of the book comprises three introductory chapters, the first two contributed respectively by editors Andreas Jucker and Klaus Schneider and dealing with the broad topics of data in pragmatic research and (in summary) methods of data collection, along with their ethical implications. The following chapter, by Roger Kreuz and Monica Riordan, is a brisk and concise survey of methodological issues around data transcription, a revised edition of their 2011 chapter on the topic. Part 2, introduced by Wolfram Bublitz, is devoted to “introspectional pragmatics”, which for Marina Sbisà’s chapter involves surveying philosophical contributions to pragmatics with methodological implications, whereas Yan Huang focuses on “classical and neo-Gricean pragmatics” and Billy Clark on relevance theory. Part 3, entitled “experimental pragmatics” to distinguish it from what the editors take to be the narrower sense that “experimental pragmatics” now conveys, focuses on predominantly lab-based methods: it comprises chapters by Eva Ogiermann on Discourse Completion Tasks, Alma Veenstra and Napoleon Katsos on sentence judgement tasks, Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. on production tasks in psycholinguistics, and J. César Félix-Brasdefer on role play tasks. Part 4, introduced by Andreas Jucker, discusses “observational pragmatics”, under which heading Meredith Marra and Mariana Lazzaro-Salazar write on ethnographic methods, Andrea and Peter

Golato on ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, Anita Fetzer on discourse analysis and Piotr Cap on Critical Discourse Analysis. Finally, part 5 discusses corpus pragmatics methodology: introduced by Andreas Jucker, we have chapters from Gisle Andersen on corpus construction (with a focus on pragmatic objectives), Dawn Archer and Jonathan Culpeper on annotation, and Irma Taavitsainen on the potential and risks of historical corpus pragmatics. Karin Aijmer and Anne O’Keeffe contribute somewhat complementary chapters on form-to-function and function-to-form approaches respectively. Michael Haugh concludes the volume by discussing corpus work in metapragmatics, presenting a brief case study on speakers’ claims of non-serious intent.

Taken as a whole, the volume embraces methodological pluralism, and this pluralism is undoubtedly its strength. The editors have adopted a very clear stance on this, even to the extent of criticising some scholars harshly (perhaps overly so) for their perceived unwillingness to entertain the legitimacy of diverse approaches. Klaus Schneider expresses the hope that the volume will “contribute to methodological cross-fertilization and facilitate interdisciplinary work across the boundaries of what seem to be complementary research areas within the vast field of pragmatics” (p. 227).

In practice, of course, the potential for the book to provide useful methodological advice varies sharply as we range across different pragmatic approaches. It is perhaps easier to conceive of a useful chapter-length introduction to the Discourse Completion Task and its effective use (which Eva Ogiermann succeeds in providing) than of a useful introduction to how to conduct introspection (which the authors in part 2 largely refrain from attempting). Consequently, the most effective parts of this volume – and those that best meet the editors’ stated aims – seem to me those sections which each address a clearly defined methodological approach in such a way as to make it appealing and accessible for a researcher previously unaccustomed to it. From my perspective, I feel the chapters on ethnomethodology (Golato and Golato) and ethnographic methods (Marra and Lazzaro-Salazar) broadened my understanding in the way the editors hoped, while those on (predominantly) psycholinguistic methods of studying interpretation (Clark) and production (Gibbs) give a good flavour of what “experimental pragmatics” in that narrow sense (i.e. enclosed in scare quotes by the editors) can bring to the party. At a slightly more abstract level, the chapters on transcription (Kreuz

and Riordan), corpus construction (Anderson) and corpus annotation (Archer and Culpeper) also strike me as very much on point.

Elsewhere in the volume, the implicit aim of separating out the methods by which we do pragmatics from the theories that we investigate with these methods presents a greater challenge, which different authors address in different ways. For instance, Marina Sbisà writes thoughtfully and lucidly on the broad topic of philosophical approaches to pragmatics, but the methodological consequences of this are rather elusive and indirect – the section headings are predominantly the names of theorists and the contents are predominantly the corresponding ideas. Piotr Cap defines, motivates and exemplifies the practice of Critical Discourse Analysis, but is perhaps less convincing when trying to recast aspects of this analytic framework (such as the “legitimization-proximization model”) as “methods” per se. Even in the introductory chapter 2, Klaus Schneider is somewhat distracted from the topic of “methods and ethics of data collection” by other interesting features of the meta-theoretical landscape, such as the many ways in which we can categorise types of research, an issue with methodological consequences that are left somewhat opaque here.

Throughout, *Methods in Pragmatics* brings together a substantial quantity of valuable insights from some of the major scholars across the various subject areas within its remit. However, despite the best efforts of the editors in bringing the chapters into order, and linking the sections with introductory text, the volume does not strike me as one that flows smoothly when read from cover to cover.

Perhaps inevitably, there are topics that recur from one author’s contribution to another, and corresponding theoretical exposition that is repeated at length, with only minor variations. There is occasional tension between the editors and their authors: in reading Wolfram Bublitz’s introduction to part 2, I was surprised to see him taking exception (pp. 125f) to a theoretical equivalence proposed by Marina Sbisà in the following chapter, and dropping heavy hints (p. 128) about the level of detail entered into by Yan Huang in the one after that. It struck me as a little late to raise these issues. And there are, perhaps inevitably, some continuity errors: for instance, Klaus Schneider commences the introduction to part 3 affirming that “all methods discussed in part 2 of this handbook rely on the

researcher's own intuitions" (p. 219), immediately following Billy Clark's largely experimental chapter.

In short, the volume succeeds in doing its job: the diligent reader will be rewarded with a greater appreciation of the full gamut of pragmatic methodologies, as well as a more complete picture of the theoretical frameworks in play and a considerably enriched understanding of what work has been done with many of the techniques discussed. And, despite my initial scepticism on this point, I was induced to believe that the editors were correct in identifying a niche for a methods-focused work within this series. At the same time, given the extent of the theoretical digressions, duplications and reopened discussions, I felt that the text could have been considerably shorter while still addressing the editors' stated aims to just as full an extent. And given that the constraints of academic publishing have resulted in this book retailing at €249 – or €189.95 for subscribers to the complete *Handbooks in Pragmatics* series – a briefer and more economical volume might represent a greater boon to the field.

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On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.